

Message Text

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70

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ERDA-05 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00

CIEP-01 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-07 FEAE-00 FPC-01 H-02

INR-07 INT-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-03 SAM-01

OES-03 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 FRB-03 PA-01 PRS-01

USIA-06 /103 W

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R 091157Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 976

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 3214

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG, IR GW, UR

SUBJECT: GAS: TRILATERAL "SWITCH DEAL"

REFS: A. TEHRAN 10960 (DEC. 30, 1974)

B. TEHRAN 10161 (DEC. 1, 1974)

1. TEHRAN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PRESS REPORTS (APRIL 9) THAT DELEGATION, HEADED BY NIGC MANAGING DIRECTOR TAGHI MOSSADEGHI, DEPARTED FOR MOSCOW APRIL 8 FOR "FINAL TALKS" ON TRILATERAL (IRAN, WEST GERMANY, USSR) GAS DEAL.

2. MOSSADEGHI TOLD AMBASSADOR LAST WEEKEND HE WOULD BE DEPARTING FOR MOSCOW APRIL 8, COMMENTED THAT HE EXPECTED DEAL TO BE FINALIZED. MOSSADEGHI SAID SOVIETS WANT IT BADLY BECAUSE IT WOULD EARN THEM FOREIGN EXCHANGE TO DEVELOP THEIR DOMESTIC GAS GRID AND TO BUILD NEW PIPELINES TO GERMANY. MOSSADEGHI SAID ONE HANG UP IS THAT SOVIETS WANT TO CONDITION DEAL ON SALE OF SOVIET COMPRESSORS TO IRAN, AND NIGC WILL NOT BUY PRIMITIVE, BULKY SOVIET COMPRESSORS (657 TONS EACH, HE SAID
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VERSUS ABOUT 150 TONS FOR U.S. COMPRESSOR OF SUPERIOR POWER).

3. MOSSADEGHI ALSO SAID SOMETHING TO EFFECT THAT "USSR WILL NOW NOT BE INTERMEDIARY IN THIS DEAL; IRAN WILL SELL DIRECT TO THE GERMANS." AS FAR AS WE KNOW, UNDERSTANDING HAS ALWAYS BEEN THAT GERMANS WILL PAY IRANIANS DIRECTLY FOR GAS DELIVERED TO SOVIET BORDER FOR GERMANS' ACCOUNT AND WILL PAY SOVIETS A "IMPUTED TRANSIT FEE." WE UNCERTAIN WHAT MOSSADEGHI MEANT BUT DO NOT SEE HOW BASIC STRUCTURE OF DEAL COULD HAVE CHANGED, GIVEN GOI AND SOVIET INTEREST IN EARNING HARD CURRENCY.
HELMS

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